United Nations S/PRST/2016/11

Security Council

Distr.: General
28 July 2016

Original: English

Statement by the President of the Security Council

At the 7749th meeting of the Security Council, held on 28 July 2016, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "Peace consolidation in West Africa", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council takes note of the report (S/2016/566) of the Secretary General on the United Nations Office in West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) and welcomes the briefing on 11 July 2016 by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel, Mohamed ibn Chambas.

"The Security Council welcomes the merger of the Office of the Special Envoy for the Sahel (OSES) and United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA) and encourages the Special Representative to take necessary steps for further progress in the merger and to maximize synergies by ensuring a unified management and structure of the new United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS).In this regards, the Security Council welcomes the establishment by UNOWAS of a liaison cell in Nouakchott, Mauritania, and a coordination and regional partnerships section in Dakar, Senegal, in order to strengthen United Nations engagement with subregional and regional organization, including the Permanent Secretariat of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G5 Sahel).

"The Security Council expresses full support to the Special Representative and looks forward to enhance ongoing activities undertaken by UNOWAS in the areas of good offices, subregional and regional cooperation to address cross-border and cross-cutting threats to peace and security, as well as the promotion of good governance, respect for the rule of law and human rights, and gender mainstreaming.

"The Security Council welcomes the recent positive political developments in West Africa, in particular the holding of free and peaceful elections in Niger, Benin and Cabo Verde. The Security Council stresses the importance of the upcoming elections in Ghana and The Gambia to be free, fair, peaceful, inclusive and credible, and further stresses the need to closely follow these processes with great attention. The security council takes note of the Communique adopted by ECOWAS Summit in June 2016 which commended Gambia's political stakeholders for the signing, on 20 April 2016, of an agreement to hold free elections and encouraged the Gambian

Government and Parliament to initiate the requisite reforms for the conduct of inclusive, free and credible elections while urging the security forces to refrain from the use of excessive force against the citizens and adopt a responsible approach. The Security Council takes note of the statements by relevant organs of African Union and United Nations on the events of 14 and 16 April 2016 in The Gambia. In this regard, the Security Council welcomes the continued engagement of UNOWAS, ECOWAS and the African Union.

"The Security Council expresses concern over the latest political development in Guinea-Bissau and encourages national actors to abide by the Constitution and the rule of law, while striving to find a peaceful resolution to the crisis.

"The Security Council welcomes the leadership demonstrated by countries in West Africa and the Sahel in spearheading initiatives to address security challenges in the region. They encourage further collaboration between Member States, regional and subregional organizations and relevant United Nations entities to enhance social cohesion and to address challenges to good governance.

"The Security Council commends the engagement of UNOWAS with subregional and regional organizations, in particular the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the G-5 Sahel, the Lake Chad Basin Commission and the Mano River Union, in order to promote peace and stability in West Africa and the Sahel.

"The Security Council notes the collaboration undertaken between UNOWAS and the Peacebuilding Commission and encourages continued close and effective cooperation in in support of sustainable peace in the region.

"The Security Council strongly condemns all terrorist attacks carried out in the region, in particular in the Lake Chad Basin region, notably by Boko Haram, as well as in Mali, Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso and the Sahel region. The Security Council stresses the need to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including by addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism. The Security Council expresses particular concern about attacks on civilians, who are the main victims of these attacks.

"The Security Council welcomes the subregional and regional and international efforts to mitigate the security, humanitarian and development consequences of these attacks. The Security Council takes note of the progress made in the operationalization of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF). The Security Council urges the Members States participating in the MNJTF to further enhance regional military cooperation and coordination, deny safe haven to Boko Haram, allow humanitarian access and facilitate the restoration of the rule of law in liberated areas. The Security Council reaffirms that Member States must ensure that any measures taken to counter terrorism comply with all their obligations under international law, in particular international human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law.

"The Security Council encourages Member States, multilateral and bilateral partners to lend their support to the MNJTF to ensure its full and prompt operationalization, including the provision of modalities to increase

the timely and effective exchange of intelligence to further the region's collective efforts to combat Boko Haram. The Security Council underscores the importance of a holistic approach to degrade and defeat Boko Haram that includes coordinated security operations, conducted in accordance with applicable international law, as well as enhanced civilian efforts to improve governance and promote economic growth in the affected areas.

"The Security Council expresses concern about piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, as well as the trafficking of drugs and other illicit goods, as well as the smuggling of migrants and human trafficking and stresses the need to strengthen the fight against criminal activities in the subregion.

"The Security Council expresses strong support to the States in the region affected by the smuggling of migrants and human trafficking, emphasizes the need to step up coordination of efforts in order to strengthen an effective multidimensional response to these common challenges and stresses that addressing both smuggling of migrants and human trafficking requires a coordinated, multidimensional approach with States of origin, of transit, and of destination.

"The Security Council commends the efforts of the African Union and ECOWAS, as well as of Member States in West Africa and the Sahel to strengthen border security and regional cooperation, including through the G5 Sahel and the Nouakchott process on the enhancement of the security cooperation and the operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture in the Sahel and Sahara region and in this regard welcomes the decision taken by the Defense Ministers of the Sahel-Saharan community to establish a new counter-terrorism center with its headquarters in Cairo, Egypt, and called on them to further enhance their cooperation in this regard.

"The Security Council remains committed to working closely with the African Union, ECOWAS, the Economic Community of Central African States, the Lake Chad Basin Commission and the G5 Sahel to strengthen subregional and regional cooperation to address cross-border security threats and prevent the spread of terrorism. In that respect, they welcome the assistance of UNOWAS to the efforts of ECOWAS Commission to implement its Regional Framework for Security Sector Reform (SSR) and Governance and to promote a coordinated SSR approach in the region.

"The Security Council takes note of the ongoing strengthening of the cooperation between the United Nations presences in West Africa. In this regard, they welcome the biannual meetings of West Africa-based United Nations peacekeeping and special political missions, the most recent of which was held in Dakar on 20 May 2016 where the Heads of Mission agreed to continue to cooperate closely and share information on key issues affecting West Africa and the Sahel.

"The Security Council reiterates deep concern over the dire humanitarian situation caused by the activities of Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin region. In this regard, the Security Council calls international community to immediately support the provision of urgent humanitarian assistance for the people most affected by the crisis in Cameroun, Chad, Niger and Nigeria,

including by fulfilling the United Nations appeal for the Lake Chad Basin region.

"The Security Council commends the Special Representative for its participation in the briefing on "Peace and Security in Africa: Challenges of the Sahel Region" that was held on May 26th, encourages further progress by the United Nations system and its partners towards the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS), including through support to the Group of 5 for the Sahel (G5), in order to assist in addressing the security and political challenges to the stability and development of the Sahel region and reaffirms its continued commitment to address such challenges, which are interrelated with humanitarian and development issues as well as the adverse effects of climate and ecological changes.

"The Security Council looks forward to the conclusion of the evaluation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel, requests UNOWAS to coordinate with States in the Sahel and all other stakeholders to present concrete recommendations and lessons learned from the evaluation process and emphasized the need for the outcome of such evaluation lead to a refocused strategy and better coordination to ensure its effective implementation across the three pillars, namely governance, security and resilience. The Security Council expresses its intention to periodically monitor progress made in this regard.

"The Security Council welcomes the success achieved by countries of the region in the fight against Ebola and reiterates its concern about the humanitarian, social and economic consequences of this disease.

"The Security Council expresses support and solidarity to the affected countries and calls them to strengthen the early warning mechanisms and resilience of their national health systems in this regard."